

The True Northerner

PAW PAW, MICHIGAN

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OUR FLAG

"Liberty and Union, Now and For-
ever, One and Inseparable."

"No disgrace to be Poor," is an expression often seen in print, and a sentiment sometimes uttered from the pulpit and public platform by sincere and well meaning orators. The sentiment is undoubtedly as true today as in the years gone by. Nevertheless it will be mighty humiliating in Van Buren county in the future for the friends of an old soldier, if he does not happen to have enough laid by to provide a respectable burial when Taps sound for him. In a resolution passed by the Board of Supervisors at their recent session, \$35.00 was fixed as a maximum charge for the burial of an indigent soldier or sailor. The resolution was offered by Supervisor Burger of Bangor; Supervisor Wheeler of Antwerp moved an amendment to make the maximum \$40.00, and the yeas and nays vote that followed showed at least a part of the Board had a conscience, and were in favor of showing some little respect to the memory of those departed heroes of the great war, even though fortune had not smiled on him in the declining years. The amendment lost however, and the original motion carried. The burial expense of an old soldier is therefore limited to \$35.00. Think of it! What a magnanimous tribute to one who has fought and bled to preserve the Union in those dark days of '61 to '65. Why bury them at all? Why not send the mortal remains to the medical department of some University who would be glad to save Van Buren county the munificent burial fee of \$35.00 and perhaps pay a few dollars for the privilege. No community with a spark of humane patriotism will ever permit a soldier to be laid to rest with the service that the \$35.00 allowed by the county will purchase.

There is considerable grumbling over the fact that the American soldiers are still kept in Russia. Some critics have even gone so far as to express a fear that our boys might starve or freeze to death in those frigid regions of Northern Russia. There is no need to worry over the boys so far as care and comfort is concerned. The American government has made ample provision all that. What the War Department should do and at the earliest possible date, is to announce to the folks at home, just what our troops are in Russia for. The American people are just as willing that our soldiers should remain in Russia, if it is necessary to consummate the peace plans of the Allies, as they are willing that our boys should constitute a part of the great army of occupation in Germany; But inquisitiveness is a characteristic of the American people and fathers and mothers have a right to know for what purpose their boys are retained in a country with which we are not at war. An early announcement of the Russian policy of the Allies will clear up the whole matter, and make a more harmonious patriotic feeling among the home folks. In the meantime don't worry.

The Paw Paw Schools are to be commended on their enterprise in providing a first class Lecture Course for the entertainment and enjoyment of the citizens of the community. There are many however who have not shown their appreciation by the purchase of a season ticket.

Some difference these days from the corresponding days of January of last year, but there is plenty of time yet for the annual destruction of all the Fruit Crops.

The United States Post Office Department has up to this date, offered no adequate explanation of the bungling delivery of soldier's mail across the water. The inefficiency for which the government is being severely criticised is not newspaper bunk or political capital. It is the actual fact as it exists. Just for illustration, one Paw Paw boy who has been twice wounded and has been in a hospital in France for several months, has not received a single piece of mail since last June. His parents have written him several times each week during all these months, and his friends and home companions have sent letters and post cards with number. Besides this, his parents mailed a parcel of several dollars value, that would make the heart of the wounded boy glad; but it has never been delivered. It is easy to comprehend the difficulty of prompt delivery of letters to the boys at the Front, or to those who are being transferred frequently; but to one whose address remains the same for months, and in a hospital at that, the gross inefficiency is difficult to contemplate. No blame can be attached to postmasters or employees at home. The fault lies in the system or rather lack of system in handling the soldiers mail abroad.

Up to this time, no snow plow has been seen on the sidewalks of the village, although there has been several heavy falls of snow. We don't know what the idea is, but certainly some provision should be made by the village officials to clean the walks after a fall of snow, for the comfort and convenience of pupils of the schools if for nothing else.

A number of subscribers in the various precincts of Van Buren county have failed to complete payment of their subscription to the County War Fund. The War Fund was solicited last spring on the theory and promise that no further subscriptions would be asked before next May. This promise was made of course with the expectation that every dollar subscribed would be paid in. The War Board expects to make good on the promise, but it is absolutely necessary that every dollar of the subscription be paid in. The war of course is to all intents and purposes ended; but the work of the allied war boards is not completed, nor will it be until after every American soldier is at home. There is need for every dollar of the Van Buren county War Fund, and every subscriber should see that his full subscription is paid at once, and not make it necessary for another solicitor to make a personal call for collection.

From Soldier Boys

Letter from Sergeant Jesse A. Lamson, Headquarters Co., 119th, Field Artillery, A. E. F. to the True Northerner. The letter was dated from Bar-le-Duc, France, December 7th, 1918.

Just received an edition of The True Northerner dated November 15, and was amused when I read the notes on the celebration which you had there. There is no doubt about it that everybody was happy, but I can say there were none happier than the boys on the line. Of course, we couldn't celebrate as you all did back home, but we built bon-fires, shot up some of our ammunition, and sung songs. After it was all over, we moved back to a rest area and have been here since. Will probably remain here until peace is settled, and then move toward home.

All we are doing now is eating, and keeping in good health, while some of the boys have gone on furloughs. We were in all the big drives from Chateau Thierry to the end and I didn't miss any of it. The only thing we missed out on was being in the army of occupation, but I'm satisfied. The question the boys want answered now is "When do we go home", and believe me the old home town will look good to me. Hoping I shall be with you all in a few months, I am,

The True Northerner is in receipt of a copy of 'The Stars and Stripes' of December 6th, mailed by First Lieutenant, Frank L. Isbell in France. This is the official soldier's paper, is published in Paris, France and is a credit to its promoters and publishers. The following is clipped from the editorial columns of the issue in question:-

"As for the future, we know that the nation that has asked us to come across the seas and fight the battle there, which we have, again expects great things from us, and these great things will be judged only so far as

we maintain our self-respect and only so far as we try to rise to those ideals with which the nation has fed us since our early infancy.

"We must be honorable and true and self-restrained and noble. "We go back not to an old order, because the old order has passed away. We go back to the home land to make all things new; not merely living according to principles which controlled society in past days, but to bring new power to those principles and establish a new era in the economic world, social world and religious world.

"As this war has attained, at last, the making of the world safe for Democracy, so must you and I come back and make Democracy safe for the world."

Letter from Private Lynn Reynolds to "Dad". Dated from Pont-A-Mousson, France. The letter is embellished by two of Lynn's characteristic pen sketches, depicting a street scene at this place at night. One is entitled, "Getting it on" the other "Getting it off". The "it" refers to mud. Following is the letter.

Dear "Dad":—Owing to the fact that those in authority have deemed it advisable and practicable to lift the iron clamp of censorship, or release it to an extent, so that news may flow more loosely, I am going to do a little "Double Time" with my self filler. You have been fully informed about this pleasing arrangement no doubt.

This will read and seem more like a letter from me I presume. I know I feel more like writing a letter, from the fact that my letters when in true form are spectacular nothings, which privilege I have been rudely deprived of since Hoboken was lost in the mist.

We are now in Pont-A-Mousson, France, a beautiful but well perforated city in the Vosges Mountains. It is near the city of Nancy and about twenty-five miles from Metz. The city was almost deserted when we moved in, except for colored American troops. However, the French soldiers and civilian population are rapidly returning to claim their "Once Was" homes. French, British and Italian prisoners are returning daily in large numbers from Germany. They have of course been itching during their captivity to relieve their minds, and the yarns they unload upon us are quite interesting. One French prisoner told me the other day that the people of Germany shouted "Viva France" as the French left Germany.

We landed at Liverpool, stayed at a camp there and then went to Rumsey. From there to Southampton and by the Channel to Cherbourg, France, to Guefres, thence to several other places in Western France and finally to Geve, and were about six weeks at this point. France was made a replacement mint, and the majority of us were transferred to the 328th, Field Artillery. I am in Battery A. Now, from the last mentioned place we went to the Metz front and were in active service eleven days before armistice was signed, and it was a warm eleven days, believe me.

From the front we returned to this little city, and have very comfortable quarters, but for how long I don't know.

The days that are passing are anxious days for all the boys. All are anxious to return to their homes and the news about when that will be is more or less contradictory. I am doing my best to keep in good physical condition, and in the proper frame of mind until I can shake the O. D.

My mail has been "Gummed Up" on account of my transfer. I have had but one letter from you over here. I have no information but hope all is well at home. Keep a stiff upper lip.

Excerpts from letter from Private Claude Kline to his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Joe Kline of Paw Paw. The letter was dated December 16.

Dear Mother, Father and all— I am feeling fine, and the weather is good. You would not know that it was December here. I haven't seen a bit of snow, and while it is a little cool in the morning, it warms up during the day. It rains a great deal, but thank goodness I am inside where it does not bother me any. I hope I never have to sleep again like I have slept. I have laid down a good many nights on the ground with not even a pup tent over me. Just wrap a blanket around me and lie down in the mud. In the morning we would be wet through and through and soaked with mud. We wouldn't build a fire to get dry by either for we were near the enemy lines and the smoke would have revealed our location. That would mean those big shells dropping all around. When one of those big shells explode, the

pig iron and shrapnel fly in every direction, scattering death all around. Thank God, it is all over, and peace will soon be signed. Gee, I wish they would start me for home pretty quick. This is a nice place all right but I don't like it. Give me the good old U. S. A. always and forever. How did you like my mustache in the picture. It is a peach. Hope I may soon be home. Love to you all.

This striking picture of operations on the actual field of battle was written by Sergeant Harry W. Miller, son of Mr. and Mrs. W. K. Miller of Almena township. The writer is in a hospital in Bath, England recovering from wounds received on the field of battle, and the letter was written from there to a friend in Rochester N. Y. and published in a paper in that city. It will be remembered that Sergeant Miller was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal for gallantry on the field of battle, in the drive he so vividly described in the following lines.

"The Allied forces had advanced until the line was practically parallel to the Hindenburg line of defense running from Lille through Cambrai, St. Quentin and LeFere to Laon. It took stiff battling to get this far, but the American troops in the sector hadn't been employed in this advance. We're attached to the British here for purposes of maneuver, and have been since going into action months ago, as you've read in the papers. As a consequence you may not hear so much about our work as you would were we with the Americans.

"As I said all the advance defenses had been overcome and the line was up against the front line trenches of the Hindenburg system. They were battling fiercely to get near Cambrai and St. Quentin. Right here they needed a couple of fresh divisions to step in and tear a hole in this famous line between these two cities, so that it could be rolled up toward the north and get behind Cambrai, and toward the south to get behind St. Quentin. "Our gallant division and a southern division of volunteers were it. That was the task. You must consider that it meant an advance of three miles through what was probably the best-wired and best defended trench system in existence. We (the two divisions), had all the assistance that tanks, aircraft and artillery could give us.

"The sector selected was almost equi-distant from the two strongholds On Friday, September 27th, at dawn a brigade from each division went over and took the forward trenches. of the "line" in a preliminary advance of a thousand yards, leaving the "big show", and taking of the line itself, an advance of four thousand yards, for Sunday, September 28th. But these brigades lost all they had gained before Sunday came around.

"Although we were not due to go over the top until Sunday morning, we rushed up to within a mile of where the First Brigade were having their trouble, in case Jerry should come too strong.

"From here on I speak only of one platoon, a third of the company. Friday night, and Saturday and until four o'clock Sunday morning we lived in some shallow holes in the ground, although we were out of observation.

"No rations or water but some that I first tactfully procured from some Australians less than a mile away, then frankly stole from them. On both occasions that I went after these rations I saw men go down under shell fire.

"At four o'clock Sunday morning we were all aroused and got ourselves together in preparedness for the biggest day some of us ever had, and the last day for some of us. I, together with a Sergeant Halahan, from Rochester, slept or rather spent the night in a hole which we dug about two feet deep and not quite broad enough for both of us. Several times in the drizzling night shells landed close to scatter dirt on us, and twice we had to get up and put our gas masks on.

"We got started. A long file of men disappearing in the darkness. Ten yards between men and fifty yards between gun teams, so a shell wouldn't get more than one or two. We went about a mile and then entered a sunken road where we were safe from Machine gun fire. But Jerry knows where those sunken roads are and drops shells into them off and on, for pasture I guess. Anyway, right here the Machine Gun company of the 108th, United States Infantry had its first casualties of this war. Two of our best men were carried back.

"Before six o'clock we went over from this sunken road, so as to be as far as possible from such a source of attraction from Jerry's iron. All was strangely quiet. It was just brightening up a little in the east. One could make out the first wave a hundred yards ahead, and the second wave,

which we were in, lined up to our right and left. (A wave is but a skirmish line of men three or four yards apart.) The men were standing in their places talking and joking, awaiting the zero hour, which was six o'clock.

"All was strangely quiet. Then suddenly behind us three eighteen-pounders snapped out in the still morning about a half second apart. A couple of seconds later two more snapped their venomous bark into the stillness. We never heard the third report. Why? Because all hell broke loose before it came. Behind us thousands of artillery crews were throwing shells into all the Hindenburg trenches, all the wire, and over all the roads and paths for miles behind the lines.

"In our immediate rear were row after row of machine guns firing over our heads on to the roads and trenches with their range of 3,000 yards. Simultaneously with this breaking loose of the heaviest barrage ever used, we went forward, walking easily on the alert. It was but a minute or so and Jerry was opened up. And he is no slouch at throwing trains and foundries and the like at you.

"We had been going for about an hour. Many men had already gone down, but very few that go down die. Most of them drag themselves back to a first aid station and finally land in a hospital. Others are carried back on stretchers. But occasionally there is one who never moves again; he is left where he falls.

"Shells landed all around us and among us, but hurt no one except to throw them off their feet once in a while with the concussion. I had great difficulty in keeping the boys separated, they would bunch. I couldn't hear myself shout.

"Then it happened. A big shell fell behind me, not as close as some, but about fifteen yards away. Instinctively I was going to flop to try to avoid the splinters; but I was knocked violently on my face instead. Something had hit me in the right shoulder, and it smote me with a mighty smite. But two minutes before I had passed the right arm and shoulder of a man, so my first thought as I went down was, "there goes my shoulder." But I soon discovered that I still had my arms, and I was on my feet again.

"It had knocked most of the men down. I was one of the first up, and as I saw them getting up again, I wondered if everyone had escaped

that one also. No. Two did not rise. Both sergeants, and both unconscious. I soon ascertained that one had a broken limb, the other one, the one I had slept with two nights before we left in a dying condition. As one of the officers had commandeered my compass, I commandeered Sergeant Holahan's, and we went on. I don't know to this day whether he is or alive.

"I tried to raise my usually faithful right hand to signal the men forward (I was the only Sergeant left, so had to go on) but for once it failed me. With my left hand I hung it in a sling of my gas mask, and used my left hand to signal with. I shan't tell you of that days work. Suffice it to say that at four o'clock we were a thousand yards beyond the Hindenburg line.

"The boys that were left were mixed with the other units and I started back, my runner with me. He is a Rochester boy. Driscoll is his name, and the coolest and clearest-headed lad I ever knew. Most men turn to mere automats and work as per orders in such circumstances, and leave all to their leaders. But not he. He was a wonderful aid all during the day.

"My shoulder hadn't bled very much, so I hadn't had it dressed yet. By six o'clock I had reported to regimental headquarters. I don't believe that I was more than half conscious for when Herb offered to help me up the many steps out of the dugout I disdainfully refused. There was a dressing station a few yards away, where I was taken and placed in an ambulance, Sunday night about 6:30. Monday night I was in a hospital in bed. The X-ray showed a compound fracture, and a piece of shell fondly nestled next to my lung in the shoulder. That is the efforts of one day."

..If You Please..

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The price will be the same as if you sent it in.

I will make a commission. You will be saved the trouble and expense of postage and everybody will be happy. THANK YOU.

Wynn Wakeman..

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Here are some prices you will not overlook if you value your own best interests. Inventory reveals an over supply in some lines. These goods must be sold while they are new, hence this opportunity and these prices. We are not worrying about the profits, you can take that along with the goods.

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